Mela Ghadari Babean da :

An expression of folk knowledge

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Melas and their space in culture

Mela transliterates to meeting or gathering; and translates to fair which is often festive and public. Indian cultural consciousness is not alien to concept of *mela,* it is a pan-India phenomena as can be seen in the tradition of *Kumbh mela, Pushkar mela, Sonepur mela* among other grand *melas* of the country. The common characteristic is foundational existence of all the major *melas* of the country as they are pillared on spiritual faith and a folk myth supporting the faith. *Kumbh mela*, one of the biggest fair of the nation is nourished on the mythic story of *samudra manthan*[1]. The mythic versions narrate that when *Dhanvantri* (God of Ayurveda) was safely taking the pot or *kumbh* of *amrit* he halted at four spots where the *melas* are conducted. In another version the *kumbh* was carried by *Garruda, Indra* or *Mohini* (all mythic characters) which was mistakenly spilled at some places which have now become the sites of the *mela*. However, rivers or lakes have been sites for *melas* since long; the primary reason is open availability of water, since most of the *melas* have religious tone bathing becomes an important ritual of *mela.* Studies also attribute the rivers and waters bodies as site of *melas* to the nature worshipping civilization. As the civilization was nature fearing and nature worshipping "ਉਸਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਕ੍ਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਜਿਓਂਦੀ ਜਾਗਦੀ ਵਸਤ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ

[1] Samudra manthan, or churning of the ocean. According to the episode mentioned in *Bhagwad* and *VishnuPuran* the *amrit* or elixir was extracted throught churning and was kept safely in *kumbh* or pot.

ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਓਹਨੂੰ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਜਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ|"[2] (so s/he (humans) started envisioning nature as living entity like himself and started worshiping it in the manifestation of *Devtas* and *Devis.*) These religious gatherings turned cyclic as per the weather and started accumulating a festive air. In Punjabi culture the *melas* also occupy the realm of *lokik* or worldly. These ceremonial festivities are not only pillared on mythic, or religious worshipping of God and Goddesses but has Semitic and cultural overtone as well. (Recently a friend told me that *peer*, as we commonly use in semitic divinity, also means somebody who is old, or *bujurg* .so we can see the overlapping of the divinity and community's vision towards their aged.) Writing about *melas* in Punjab Dr. Kulwant Kaur says

> "ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੱਡੇ-ਵਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੜ੍ਹੀ[3] ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਵੀ ਮੇਲੇ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਗਈ | ਜਦੋਂ ਪੀਰਾਂ ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਵੱਧੀ ਜਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਰਾਮਾਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਸੁਣੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਡੇਰੇ, ਤਕੀਏ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਭੀੜ ਵਧਣ ਲੱਗੀ ਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ ਲੱਗਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਏ |"[4]
>
> (Eventually the memorials built at their(ancestors) funeral sites became sites for gathering or *melas. Peers* and *Fakirs* also became popular among people with their divine powers, and so the disciples and worshippers gradually started visiting there and this transformed into *mela.*)

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[2] ਕੌਰ, ਕੁਲਵੰਤ | ਲੋਕ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਲੋਕ ਸ਼ੁਗਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ-ਤਿਓਹਾਰ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ | ਵਾਰਿਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੨੦੧੪. ੫੬ -੫੭.

[3] Marri or Marhi is a small memorial made at the funeral site to keep a dead family member's memory alive. It is often made of mud or cement and is not grand.

[4] ਕੌਰ, ਕੁਲਵੰਤ | ਲੋਕ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਲੋਕ ਸ਼ੁਗਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ-ਤਿਓਹਾਰ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ | ਵਾਰਿਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੨੦੧੪. ੫੬ -੫੭.

This reflects that faith is not only expressed through distant mythic tales but is also practiced through Semitic tradition of worshipping the graves of divine dead. One such overlapping of the Semitic and Vedic cultural influences can be seen in the celebration of *shapaar da mela* which is celebrated in Ludhiana. It is a mela paying homage to *Gugga sapp* or a snake named Gugga. The folk tale runs on the character named Gugga who had worshipped the snakes to win his fiancé back. He was an incarnation of kings of snake who was born as Rajput prince, he appeased the snakes and won his fiancé, however his jealous maternal cousins wanted his wife and resultantly were killed by Gugga in the battle. Gugga's mother could not take the pain that her son had killed her nephews and bewailed her loss, humiliated and ashamed Gugga appealed to earth to consume him; hearing his appeal the earth replied – "ਤੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੈਂ, ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੀ ਹਾਂ।"[5] (you are Hindu, I can only give space to Muslim) Thus, Gugga converted to Islam and was consumed by earth. Presently the fair celebrated in his honor has resulted in various *marhis*[6] in numerous villages which also celebrate *Gugga naomi*, but the main *marhi* remains in *Shapaar* village, Ludhiana. The concept of *marhi* is Semitic as it is very close to the idea of tomb constructed in memory of a passed away soul. This has added a tradition of celebrating and preserving the dead through ceremonial *melas* as can be seen through *sakhi sarvar da mela,* celebrated at Sakhi Sarvar's grave, *Nakodar da mela* celebrated at dargah of Murad Shah ji and various other such *melas*. These people are not only divine *peers* and *fakirs* but in simple words are local heroes which are popular in single village, or sometimes in entire state, or entire community. Thus Punjabi community, "ਜੋ ਸੁਭਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਬੀਰ- ਪੂਜਾ ਪਸੰਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਝੁਕਦਾ ਹੈ।[7]" (Which

[5] ਕੌਰ, ਕੁਲਵੰਤ। ਲੋਕ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਲੋਕ ਸ਼ੁਗਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ-ਤਿਓਹਾਰ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ। ਵਾਰਿਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, 2014. 86 - 89

[6] See note no. 3

[7] ਕੌਰ, ਕੁਲਵੰਤ। ਲੋਕ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਲੋਕ ਸ਼ੁਗਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ-ਤਿਓਹਾਰ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ। ਵਾਰਿਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੨੦੧੪. ੫੮

naturally bows down to a greater power than himself/themselves and worships it.) has a capacity to look up to the revered and elderly and celebrate their greatness. Seeing in this light, celebration of yearly 5 day *mela* in honour of *Ghadari* martyrs, is actually only an extension and expression of the Punjabi folk for its heroes.

Ghadarites and Punjabi Folk's version of History

Ghadar Movement is a huge chapter in Freedom struggle of India. The chronological history is not unknown to Indians and has been repeated in various books mentioning the history. But the root of the movement has been a debatable matter between the Historians and the Folk. E.H Carr in his book *What is History?* Asserts that History will never be objective since it is humans writing about other humans. The historian has an Outlook; his methodologies are rooted in his outlook, and cannot be exercised without it. The principle battle of the Folk is with the disseminated outlook and the methodology of the Historian. Looking at the address of Ghadarites it can be seen that they are local heroes, beyond being national heroes. The word *Baba* (ਬਾਬਾ) has religious connotations, The term *Baba* (plural *Babe*) is not a self-appointed term, the Ghadarites were addressed as *Babe* by the masses. Firstly, in Punjabi culture old men are often addressed as *Baba*, secondly this address has respect which is not very pronounced other alternatives like *Burra, Bujurg* or *Bhaaia*. Thirdly, these Ghadarites had aged in 1950s and so the masses began addressing them as *Babe.*

To understand the construction of the term we first need to understand the composition of the Movement. Ghadar as a movement started from racial consciousness that Indians (primarily Punjabis) realized living in USA and other parts of the world. This can be compared to Marxian idea of "trauma" that he calls the impetus of the movement. It cannot be negotiated that Ghadarites

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had freedom of the nation as the aim of their project, but the chief impetus was realization of better living conditions of Americans and Europeans. They realized that Indians are not having good living conditions because they are primarily slaves to foreign powers. Thus the impetus is chiefly pillared on achieving equality. Talking about the composition of the movement Sachindra Nath Sanyal, a Bengali Ghadarite in his autobiography *Bandi Jiwan* calls his contemporaries as "Sikh *Krantikari*[8]" [9] (सिख क्रन्तिकारी). Ajmer Singh while talking about Sanyal's autobiography mentions that the book mentions "distinctive qualities and conduct of these (Sikh *Krantikaris)* people."[10] Often, by the present historians, and especially by the historians who were adamant to construct freedom struggle in 'secular' light have done injustice to the identities of the people. As pointed out previously, the roots of the movement are distorted by academic historians in endeavor to give a false colour of nationalism to a movement, which was nationalist, in its own rights. Kartar Singh Saraba, one of the major Ghadarite turned a revolutionary inspired by Sikh Gurus. In journal *Chand* Bhagat Singh wrote about Kartar Singh Sarabha as "Guru Gobind Singh's Sikh Kartar Singh"[11] This becomes important because the principle impetus is misinterpreted when the identity is not rightly identified. Every cultural community has an outlook; they have distinctive features and a specific capacity to deal with problems. Punjabi community has often been recognized by academicians and anthropologists as martial race, historical experiences are one case, another is presence of Sikh ideals in Punjabi consciousness. Principle of Sikhism is to fight against

[8] Krantikari is hindi word for Revolutionary
[9] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.
[10] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.
[11] Singh, Ajmer. "Gadari babe kaun sann- Bhai Ajmer Singh Historian in Vancouver". Uploaded by baldev752. December 10 2013.

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oppression and injustice[12] which is embedded in the religion. Thus the impetus of the revolution is through folk faith and ethics and this is the primary idea which the Punjabi Ghadarites have been trying to contest. *Ghadar di Goonj* [13](Echoes of the Ghadar) an anthology of poems written by the Ghadarites published by the memorial, *Desh Bhagat yadgar committee,* has chronological telling of the major events related to *Ghadar* and appears on the second page as –

ਸਮਰਪਤ

(Homage to)

ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ

(The centuries of Revolution)

(1913,ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ)

(1913, Founding of Ghadar Party)

(1914, ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਬਜਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਸਾਕਾ)

(1914, Kamagatamaru ship and bajbaj coast incident)

(1915, ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਾਭਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ)

(1915, Martyrdom of Kartar Singh sarabha and others)

(1916, ਸਾਕਾ ਫੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ)

(1916, Incident of Feru Sheher)

[12] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.
[13] ਸਿੰਘ, ਅਮੋਲਕ. ਸੰਪਾਦਕ. *ਗ਼ਦਰ ਦੀ ਗੂੰਜ*, ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਜਲੰਧਰ. ੨੦੧੩.

(1917, ਰੂਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ)

(1917, Russian Revolution)

This is specifically given counter the modern academic dissemination of the Movement. There was a heavy influence of Leftist ideas and communism in Indian freedom struggle, but, Ghadar Movement cannot be recognized as a leftist Movement. The endeavor of the people has been to eradicate the alleged inspiration from Russian Revolution and correct its projection to a homegrown Movement. The chronology given at the start of the book tells that since Russian Revolution happened three years after the formation of Ghadar Party, it cannot be the impetus of the same. The movement was organic and was founded on community beliefs and ethics. The monthly pamphlet/journal *Kirti* was brought out in February 1926 by Ghadarite *Baba* Santokh Singh. It was meant to spread communism, but it was produced by Ghadarites and was edited by Ghadar Party. The tone and language choice becomes important to study, firstly the paper came with lines written from Gurbani, which were –

"ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਆਪਣਾ |

(With our own hands we can,)

ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰਿਅਨੁ[14] ||"

(Shape and create our deeds.)

[14] Singh, Ajmer. "Gadari babe kaun sann- Bhai Ajmer Singh Historian in Vancouver". Uploaded by baldev752. December 10 2013.

Secondly, The party members addressed each other and everyone as *Bhai* (ਭਾਈ , भाई) which not only means brother, but also holds a special place in Sikh and Punjabi consciousness[15] and refers primarily to the Sikh martyrs, who died in the wars led by the *Gurus.* Thus, *Bhai* is a venerable word in Punjabi language tradition. To change the tones of paper *Kirti* and align it with communist (and secular) some changes were after it came out in 1926. In 1927, Ram Chandra, *Pradhan* or chief member of Bhagat Singh's Naujawan Bharat Sabha wrote a book titled *History of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha* in which he substitutes the word *Bhai* with *saathi*[16] (साथी) because he felt that *Sathi* was the correct translation of comrade. Another change in *Kirti* was made by Sohan Singh Josh, editor in 1928; who changed the previously mentioned lines taken from Gurbani to Marx's "Workers of the world, Unite!"[17]

Ghadar was an organic Movement and principally wants to remain so. Ghadarites wanted to establish the rule of Labour and *Kisan* (Agriculturalist)[18] but this was rooted not in the idea of Marxian classless society (It obviously was shaded with it) but a secular vision of Sikhism. Ghadar Party had members from regions and religions, it is obvious. However, 95% of the participants were Sikh and were indeed baptized (*khande di Pahul)* Sikhs who used to take Party's decision

[15] Sikh and Punjabi are not synonymous, but Punjabi consciousness is often inclusive of Sikh consciousness; and relates with and respects the ideals of Sikhism.
[16] Sathi is hindi word for companion
[17] Marx, Karl. *Communist Menifesto.* 1848.
[18]Bhandal, Harvinder. Documentry (Safarnama) Desh Bhagat YadgarJalandhar. Uploaded by Avi Banall. 31st October 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsS1fh7HT6c

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after taking the *Hukumnama*[19] from Guru Granth Sahib.[20] The same Party, though comprised of Sikhs never used religious salutations, slogans and rhetorics to infuse enthusiasm. Dr. Harish Puri says that though comprised of Sikhs, the party didn't use "*Jo Bole so Nihaal -Sat Sri Akal*" or " *Waheguru ji ka khalsa-Waheguru jiki Fateh"* but used *Vande Mataram.*[21] Thus, it was secular, but it was not secular in modern connotation of the term. Secularism as an idea is 19th century term which came with French Revolution, whereas the Ghadarites, were rooted in organic ethics of native faith and belief system which shaped the ideology of the whole Movement.

Construction of Memorial of *Ghadari Babe*

Previous sections reveal that *Ghadri Babe* themselves and the people of masses do not see them in the light in which the Academicians see them. Baba Vasakha Singh asked Jagjit Singh (Professor by profession) to write a book on history of the Party. However Baba Bakhana was upset with the published book. Second time *Ghadari Babe* deputed this task to Gurcharan Singh Sainsar (Communist) in 1961. It was also not satisfactory or validated by the *Ghadari Babe.* The primary difference is rightly pointed out by Sachindra Sanyal, he says "The difference between revolutionaries and intellectuals is that a revolutionary has complete faith in his ideal"[22] Tudor

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[19] Hukumnama is a compound of two Persian words hukm, meaning command or order, and namah, meaning letter. In the Sikh tradition, historically it refers to the letters sent by the Sikh Gurus to their Sikhs or sangats (congregation) in different parts of the country during the period of the Ten Gurus from 1469 to 1708. However, now it is used to refer to the Shabd {hymn} that is read after the Ardas prayer is said in the presence of the Sikh holy scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In this case the word is can also be shortened to just the Guru's Hukam.

Sodhi, Surinder Singh, Editor. *Sikhiwiki.org*. 2nd May 2007. http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Hukamnama. 24 April 2017.

[20] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.

[21]Singh, Ajmer. *Ghadari Babe kaun sann – anmatian de kood dawean da khandan*. 2013. Singh Brothers, Amritsar. 2014. PDF

[22] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.

Shannon also places Social scientists and scholars in the same category as priests, bankers and Generals; they fail to grasp the essence of the revolutionaries.[23] Another two attempts to write about the Ghadarites was by Sohan Singh Josh (1978) who was communist and by Dr. Harish Purif, affliated to GNDU. All the four attempts disappointed the Ghadarites. A common feature was their tone; all the four books refrain from calling the Ghadarites Sikhs and instead call them "Hindi"[24] The problem is not about the identity, Ajmer Singh is trying to point out that the academicians and scholars unconsciously do not let the text remain democratic; or in the tier of grassroots . While Punjabi masses relate to the *Ghadari Babe* because they relate to them, and look up to them as their ancestors, once their Punjabi identity is dissolved in the created Nationalist flavor of the academicians, it loses the appeal for the folk. Ghadari ideology is not against literature; in fact Baba Bakhana wrote his autobiography in 1930 titled *Meri Ram Kahani. Ghadar* paper was also published in Hindi and Gujrati for circulation of ideas. The memorial in itself is proof of the same.

The construction Desh Bhagat Yadgaar Hall, began on 17th November 1959. However, the conception of idea had taken place before the partition. Sohan Singh Bhagane, a Ghadarite had come from *kala paani* in 1938. After coming he discovered that his land and house had been confiscated by the British government. This was an ordeal which was suffered by all the Ghadarites, They were landless and homeless after serving the term. Thus the *Ghadar* Parivar Sahayak committee started as a fund raising committee to house the families of Ghadarites. This fact is important to mention because the foundation of the memorial, *mela* and its ideology is

[23] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.
[24] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.

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within the people. It was decided later that a memorial should be built to honour the Ghadarites; as most of the Ghadarites who were living had aged, they remained public figures and people began calling them *Baba* out of respect and honour. The Memorial was constructed with the help of funds from the people. In this process Gurmukh Singh was one of the chief contributors and Sohan Singh Bhagana along Amar Singh Sandhwan sold their lands to raise fund for the building of the memorial. Cultural semiotics is subconsciously reproduced here, as previously narrated, building of *mardhis* is a cultural way to remember the fore-fathers. Secondly the cyclic conduction of *melas* is semiotic symbol of celebrating and keeping the memory of the ancestors alive. It was decided that the memorial is going to be a tower, later the idea was dropped because the committee did not want people to simply look above and walk by. Then it was decided that the Memorial will be a hall and have documents related to the Ghadari Movement.

Semiotic space of the Memorial and the *Mela*

Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall is now structure spread in 3 acre land, with a Hallroom which is 100ft. by 65 sq. ft. The Memorial started with preserving the not only the memory but the manuscripts and Ghadari literature. The idea is to keep "ਜੀਵਨੀਆਂ ਰਾਜਸੀ , ਆਰਥਿਕ, ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਗਿਆਂ|" (biographies, Political, Economical and Radical Literature) to establish the rule of workers and *Kisans.*[25] Here we would pause and study the choice of Architecture. The Memorial has been consciously designed, which was previously supposed to be the *Minar* or tower, was instead changed to a Hall along the idea of library. The architectural semiology is clear here; The Memorial is a Hall with photographs of the Ghadarites, a large Hall and library. The absence of room, divisions or and other structure; or the "structure-less" hall is the manifestation

[25] Bhandal, Harvinder. Documentry (Safarnama) Desh Bhagat YadgarJalandhar. Uploaded by Avi Banall. 31st October 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsS1fh7HT6c

of the flexibility of thought. A hall is a moldable space, it could be used as anything. Coming back to the literature processed and installation of library, the library has handwritten letters, pamphlets, poems and political texts written by the Ghadarites. One of the documents is Waris Shah's Heer which has carefree signature of *Shaheed* (Martyr) Uddham Singh. Beyond preserving the literature Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall also produces literature and does the research. They have researched on some lesser known heroes and have written books on *Ghadari Baba* Jwala Singh Thathiyan, *Baba* Ram Singh Tundilal and other 25 -30 researches going on. The space in this way is a free space without furniture or construction to define the "use" of the hall. Thus researches are often materialized into the seminars and conferences that are held in the Hall. The communication also needs to be looked at in this architectural space. Hall as a space is an unrestricted communicative space, where there is no barrier to transference of ideas and ideas are the chief vehicle of functioning of this Memorial. Kartar Singh Sarabha in a bus, on his way to Jalandhar from Ludhiana met a soldier. The conversation held such ideas that while departing the soldier told him that he was the in charge of the keys of the arsenal store at Mian Mir Cantonment in Lahore, and Kartar Singh could ask for the keys anytime.[26] This event is important because *Ghadari* consciousness believes in infusing mundane public spaces with revolutionary ideas. The Memroial's committee member Naunihal Singh states that "*Ghadar vichardhara* is opposite to Government."[27] The expression of the same could be seen in the *mela* held in 2016. The speakers invited at the mela were, JNU Ph. D. students Kanhaiya Kumar and Omar Khalid. The students had achieved unfavorable light, had bore the charges of being anti-national, and had also been

[26] Singh, Ajmer. "Myth and reality of Ghadar Movement by Bhai Ajmer Singh". Uploaded by darbara 16. August 10 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-Sfdn3ROg&t=2s.

[27] Kaler, Simran. "Ghadar Party Memorial a film by Simran Kaler" uploaded by Simran Kaler. 14 May 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUAXj8Exzl8

interrogated repeatedly on the charges of supporting Afzal Guru, a 'Kashmiri separatist'. However, the contrast of the ideas held by the Memorial as a space is visible here. The speakers gained large audience and the audience could understand and relate with the speakers. Here the acrobatics o the ideology can be seen, the speakers were Ph. D. students, in simple word academicians, but the audience that reaches the 5 day *mela* held from 30th October, is majorly comprised of men, women, children from the neighboring *pinds* or villages. There was a seminar in the Memorial on "ਗ਼ਾਦਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਤੇ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ" (Ideology of Ghadar and its relation) held on 27th May 2013, this shows that the Ghadar ideology sees itself in parallel to the hegemonic political ideology. Another such event is Waryam Singh Sandhu's, an honored Punjabi writer, demand in Canada to recognize Mewa Singh as the Public Hero, or Local Hero of Canada. Mewa Singh was hanged on January 11, 1915 for assassinating controversial immigration inspector William Hopkinson. Waryam Singh asserts "Today Canada celebrates its diversity, but do not forget that it wasn't like this always. The multiculturalism in this country is an outcome of sacrifices made by people like Mewa Singh. If Canada really cherishes such values then what stops it from recognizing him as hero? He should not be treated as criminal anymore." [28]These incidents are important, because the Memorial as a space would never 'belong' to the government. It would always belong to the people. Thus it changes the acrobatics of property owning hegemonic idea, which is manifested in the ideology of the government; and sometimes in the right wing. The Ghadar vision, and vision of the Memorial can be seen through the ideas discussed in the seminar held on 195th birth anniversary of Karl Marx. The Newspaper article titled "लोगों के विनाश से पूँजीपतिओं का विकास" (Luxury of the capitalists at the cost people) as appeared in Hindi

[28] "Mewa Singh should be recognized as local hero". *Ghadarmemorial.net.* http://www.ghadarmemorial.net/events.htm

newspaper Jagran notes speaker Archana Aggarwal, Professor in Hindu College, Delhi University say –

> "आज भी देश के 80 प्रतिशत लोग रोजी रोटी, पानी, बिजली, जंगल, ज़मीन, शिक्षा, सेहत सेवाओं आदि से वंचित हैं | देश के नागरिकों को चोर केवल कुछ एक नज़्दीकिओं के ख़ज़ाने भरने पर ध्यान दिआ जा रहा है|"
>
> (80% of people in the country do not have the basic necessities of food, water, electricity, land, forest land (tribes), education and health. The government is busy filling coffers of a few of their own, at the cost of the public.)

Thus when the ideology of the memorial meetings is in opposition to पूँजीपति or Capitalist strain of thought, the structure of Memorial as a space becomes Public Space instead of an 'owned space'.

Recently Madhan lal Dhingra's, a freedom fighter from Amritsar, ancestral home was about to be sold, and demolished. Desh Bhagat Yadgar Committee wrote letter to Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to stop the selling and demolishing of the hero's house and instead turn it into a monument honoring his memory. The letter urged not only the construction of the monument, but also constructing a library within the house with objects and texts related to Madan lal Dhingra. Obviously various meeting were held in the memorial, but there were also protests and marches to dissuade the decision of demolishing of the house, and pressurized the government to buy the property and create a monument. The letter's usage of words become important once again, The Subject of the letter addressed to the deputy commissioner reads "ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਮਦਨ ਲਾਲ

ਢੀਂਗਰਾ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਕੌਮੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਮੰਗ ਖੇਤਰ |" (Request to make Madan Lala Dhingra's house a national/community heritage monument.) The word ਕੌਮ or *Kaum* is a multi meaning word in Punjabi. It could refer to a small section, or community and it could also refer to nation as whole. Nonetheless, the word used her is chosen over alternatives of *Rashtar* or *Desh*; The word *Kaum* means people, it does not mean nation, or national (is not related to boundaries but to people). Thus Memorial's ideology is embedded in Public ownership. Coming back to the protests, the memorial became center of protests by the students and common people who believed in building a monument from the ancestral house of Madan Lal Dhingra. This once again shows the flexibility of the space to transform itself into a site which people make of it. The echoes of versatile space and Ghadar ideology can also be seen in appeal of preserving the house of Dhingra and urging to make a library. Installing a library transforms the space to "means" to an end, instead of being an "end", thus the human interacts with the space, in order to create. This interaction creates semiosphere [29]which can be only operated in a particular community or ideology.

Library, as we have seen is the chief section of the Memorial ideology, and Desh Bhagat Yadgar hall, as mentioned previously, also publishes Ghadar related literature. The first book published by Desh Bhagat Yadgar committee was diary written by *Baba* Vasakha Singh[30]. Publishing of first-hand accounts can mean that the Memorials aim is to transfer the ideology, which is reflected in Hari Singh Dhudike on life of Ghadarite woman Gulab Kaur. The book has a preface written by Dr. Raghubir Kaur, General Secretary of Desh Bhagat Yadgar committee. The

[29] Lotman, Yuri. "*Universe of the mind: A semiotic theory of culture*". 1990.
defined as a sphere of semiosis in which the sign processes operate in the set of all interconnected Umwelts.
[30] Kaler, Simran. "Ghadar Party Memorial a film by Simran Kaler" uploaded by Simran Kaler. 14 May 2012.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUAXj8Exzl8

book is dedicated to "ਅਜੋਕੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜੀ" (Today's young generation). In a seminar conducted in Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar (Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall is also located in Jalandhar) Waryam Singh Sandhu mentioned "ਨਵੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਕੋਲ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ ਅਗਾਂਹਵਧੂ ਜਥੇਦਾਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਹੈ"[31] (Progressive groups of the nation has a duty of taking the message of *Ghadari Babe* and give to the new generation.) Desh Bhagat Yadgar hall, does its duty by organizing the *mela.* Thus completing the circle of transmission of knowledge, which is not of the academicians or the propagated property of the government agencies; but knowledge and worldview of the people.

The five day *mela* held at the Hall has seminars, speeches, public talks, poetry sessions, performances of the *Dhadis*[32], dance performances, theatre performances and a book fair. First *mela* was held in 1991 had singing of the poems of Ghadar, a tradition which is still followed in the mela. The theatre performances go on for entire night, and the audiences remain there to watch it. Here the space is uncensored, the time is boundless: thus the space and the time fall into the hands of the people to create. The *mela* is a form of activism, since it is a counter-space which is public and offers a sense of belonging to anybody who relates with the semiosphere of the Ghadarites, their ideology, their space in Punjabi community and the Memorial as a site to express oneself. Mela becomes a space where the farmers would casually talk about their problems amidst watching the plays or listening to verses. It is a place where folk vision is the worldview against the nationalist coloured lens. The participants of the events are honoured with tokens of *Ghadari* literarture books as a mark of respect. Making *mela* a space where the common masses come

[31] "ਨਵੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਕੋਲ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ ਅਗਾਂਹਵਧੂ ਜਥੇਦਾਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਰਤੱਵ: ਵਰਿਆਮ ਸੰਧੂ". *Ghadarmemrial.net* http://www.ghadarmemorial.net/events1.htm

[32] Dhadi performances are folk narrative performers, who often sing the tales of wars and valour to urge people to fight for right.

together, create a classless audience, and remember the Ghadarites as familiar local heroes before being National heroes and National literature, the people see it as ideology produced from within their homeland. In this way the literature and ideas of the intelligentsia infuse into the idea and knowledge of the folk. In the 2016 *Mela*, a play about leftist hero of Bengal- *Hazaar Chaurisvein ki maa* , by Mahashwetadevi was staged. The audiences, could understand, watch, discuss, and enjoy the performance. Since the ideology of the play, runs into the Ideology of the Ghadarites and the masses, the play at once transports the ideas of *Ghadar* and is accepted by the people.

Once we see the tradition of building *mardhis,* worshipping it in a secular flexible way (since it does not have a defined structure and can be prayed for anything and by anybody) remembering the ancestors and discussing their inspiring attributes. We see that this modern manifestation is indeed a very folk way to express and share beliefs and ethics carried by a community.

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